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area, detracted greatly from the value of these districts. He might remark that the progress of settlement was going on with great rapidity in the north of Queensland, and stations had been taken up almost as far as the Gulf of Carpentaria. He had been much struck with the account given of the utter desolation and lifeless character of the islands on the north-west, given by Mr. Stow, which contrasted so strongly with the beautiful islands of the north-eastern coast. Some years ago, when sailing along the coast, he thought he never saw anything so perfectly beautiful and so picturesque as the whole of the coast from Moreton Bay northwards. Referring to the general fact, that the only available portions of Tropical Australia were probably the eastern portions, and that the meridian of 135° pretty nearly marked a line between the fertile parts of the East destined to a prosperous future, and the probably useless and sterile country of the West, he thought it a pity that those enterprising and gallant men, who had explored from Adam Bay westward, did not direct their efforts to some locality further eastward, more likely to be productive of solid advantage. A short journey of 600 miles would have brought them to Cape York, and saved a good deal of their tedious voyage. There was one point which he would only just advert to, namely, the utter absurdity of the views which led to the establishment of a colony in North Australia, subject to and under the jurisdiction of South Australia. They had been the means of exciting angry feelings amongst the people, and producing disruption and disunion. He would mention that a very interesting communication had arrived by the last mail. It was to the effect that steam communication had been established between Brisbane and Singapore, and no doubt the first steamer of this important new line was now on her way, so that there would in future be monthly communication by Torres Straits with Australia, and the whole continent would be encircled. He might also mention, as a fact showing the increase of rapidity of communication, that this day (27th November) we were in the receipt of news by telegraph from Australia up to the 24th October, a little more than a month.

The PRESIDENT, in closing the proceedings, said it was necessary to call attention to a fact which people were apt to forget, that it was the discovery of the mouth of the Adelaide River, in Adam Bay, by Macdougall Stuart, on his journey across the continent, which led the South Australians, however imprudently, to send a colonising expedition all round the east coast to that remote northern point. He agreed with Sir Charles Nicholson that Mr. Stow and his party would have made a more easy voyage by steering their boat eastward in the direction of Cape York; but they had already taken that route in their voyage from Adelaide to Adam Bay, and they went, like true geographers, to explore new lands; and he therefore stood up for these spirited men, because he considered that a 1600-mile boat voyage round that country was a feat of which geographers ought to be proud.

Third Meeting, Monday, December 11th, 1865.

SIR RODERICK I. MURCHISON, K.C.B., PRESIDENT, in the Chair.

PRESENTATIONS.—*J. Gwyn Jeffreys, Esq.; Binny J. Colvin, Esq.*

ELECTIONS.—*Samuel White Baker, Esq. (the discoverer of the Lake Albert Nyanza); Colonel William Edwyn Evans; John Howard Gwyther, Esq.; J. J. Halcombe, Esq.; Henri G. de Mussy, M.D.; H. J. Norman, Esq.; Oswald C. Papengouth, Esq., C.E.; Joseph Valentine Smedley, Esq., M.A.*

ACCESSIONS TO THE LIBRARY SINCE THE LAST MEETING, 27TH NOV., 1865. — ‘*Annuario corografico-amministrativo della Provincia di Siena.*’ Anno 1. ‘*Memoria sobre os Trabalhos geodesicos executados em Portugal.*’ 2 vols. Par F. Folque. Both presented by William Spottiswoode, Esq., M.A., F.R.S. ‘*Considérations générales sur l’Étude et les connoissances que demande la composition des Ouvrages de Géographie.*’ Par M. D’Anville. Presented by S. M. Drach, Esq. ‘*The Isthmus of Panama.*’ By C. T. Bidwell, Esq. Presented by the Author. Continuations of Periodicals, Transactions, &c.

ACCESSIONS TO THE MAP-ROOM SINCE THE LAST MEETING.—Map of Australia, showing the new boundary of Queensland and South Australia. Map of the White Nile, near Gondokoro, showing the last journey of Signor A. Debono in 1861. Presented by the Right Hon. H. W. Addington.

Previous to the reading of the Papers, the PRESIDENT said it would ill become him not to call attention to the great loss which science had sustained in the death of that distinguished geographer Dr. Henry Barth. The mission on which he was sent was originated and supported by this country; his explorations were, therefore, really and truly English, and he carried out his enterprise with the greatest fidelity, travelling over a large portion of Northern and Central Africa. Dr. Barth brought to his geographical investigations an energy and ability which ought to make his name long remembered amongst geographers. Little notice, he regretted to say, had as yet been taken by the English press of the decease of this distinguished man, whose works had been published in this country and who had been honoured by our own Sovereign with a Companionship of the Bath. He (the President) would not now enter more at large upon his merits, reserving that for the Anniversary Address. In his extensive travels Dr. Barth had to go from one zone of country peopled by Mahometans to another inhabited by Pagans, and showed his great qualities as a traveller by the way in which he overcame all the difficulties which obstructed each portion of his passage. His merits had been duly appreciated in Germany, particularly by our associate Dr. Petermann, and he (the President) was hopeful that the people of England would give in this case that credit to him which they were always ready to give to every eminent foreigner who did such good service.

The President also announced to the Society that he had to modify (owing to more correct intelligence having been received) what he had said with regard to the expeditions on the east and west sides of Africa, to which he had alluded with a melancholy feeling at the last meeting. One of these expeditions had been to a great extent successful, and the other had met with no real reverse. The results of the expedition of M. du Chaillu would be communicated to the Society after Christmas. When he told them that M. du Chaillu had penetrated considerably beyond his former survey, that he had made astronomical observations of great value which were now the subjects of calculation at Greenwich, that he had entered into rocky regions never before explored by a European, and that he had preserved all his notes and his valuable observations,—such results would be regarded as full compensation for what they were led in the first instance to believe had been a great misfortune.

In regard to the East Coast, he was happy to announce that the energetic

explorer Baron von der Decken had not lost both his steamers, as had been rumoured. It appeared that his small steamer was lost on the bar of the Jub, but that the other had been preserved and repaired. The party had advanced up that river to a considerable distance, and, when last heard of, were preparing to proceed on their land journey into the interior. They were in high spirits and in good health, and there was reason to hope that with so very enterprising a leader and so many appliances the expedition would be ultimately successful.

The following Papers were read :—

1. *A Boat-voyage along the Coast-lakes of East Madagascar.*

By CAPTAIN W. ROOKE, R.A.

CAPTAIN ROOKE related that having heard, whilst at Mauritius in 1864, that the chain of lakes south of Tamatave, in Madagascar, might be traversed for several hundred miles in a boat sufficiently light to be carried over the short portages, he determined to attempt their exploration. He had a boat constructed especially for the journey, and, with three companions and a native crew, started for the northern commencement of the lakes in the month of April. The whole journey from north to south occupied the party thirty-two days, during which they travelled nearly 400 miles, partly over lakes of larger or smaller dimensions, but chiefly along winding channels and streams which connected the lakes together. The chain of lakes and channels occupies a belt of low land along the coast, and is sometimes separated from the sea only by banks of sand. The large rivers which descend from the highlands of the interior are connected with the network on reaching the low belt of coast-land. During the journey the travellers passed numerous villages and several larger towns, each of about 1000 inhabitants; their voyage terminating at Manzanari. They were well received by the Hova governors; they saw very little cultivated land, and the inhabitants seemed an indolent and improvident, but good-humoured race. The banks of most of the winding channels and lakes were clothed with magnificent tropical vegetation, which in the narrow watercourses arched overhead and added much to the beauty of the scenery. At Manzanari they saw several individuals of the Akongo tribe, whose territory lies towards the south, and who have succeeded in maintaining their independence against the Hovas. Their capital is several days' journey south-west of Manzanari, and is situated on a high hill, the sides of which have been escarped for the purposes of defence.

This paper will be printed in the 'Journal,' vol. xxxvi.
